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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Tuesday, October 29, 1929.

Housekeepers' Chat

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "The Kitchen Goes Modern." From Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.
Bulletin available: "Convenient Kitchens."

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Last week I made an afternoon call on Isabel.

"Long time, no see, as the Chinaman says," was Isabel's greeting.
"What have you been doing all these years, Aunt Sammy?"

"Keeping house, and divers other things. And what, may I ask, have you been doing?"

"Making over my kitchen. Aunt Sammy, my beautiful white kitchen has at last gone modern."

"Gone modern? But Isabel, aren't you the very same person who told me she would never fall for these new-fangled kitchen ideas?"

"Yes," said Isabel, "I am she. And look what I've done to my kitchen."

I looked. At the windows, soft white curtains with big red dots. On the small white breakfast table, an oilcloth runner, with red, yellow, and blue flowers. The same sort of a runner over the top of the white enameled refrigerator, which must be used sometimes as a table. Under the sink, a bright-hued garbage pail. Hanging near the kitchen table, two knives, with red handles.

"So it's come to this," I said. "You, with your conservative ideas-- do a kitchen over in red!"

"But isn't it cheerful?" asked Isabel. "Really, there's so much white in the room--the bright colors help to relieve it. But you haven't seen my latest purchases. I made a special trip to the ten-cent store to get this red dustpan, and see my cooky jar? It's such a quaint piece of pottery-- and these splashy red posies just fit in with my color scheme. Have a cooky, Aunt Sammy."

I sampled Isabel's cookies, and we spent the afternoon talking about what a big job it is, to keep house.

"It takes lots of head work, and lots of heel work," said Isabel. "I've just discovered, within the past year, that I can make my head save my heels. Take my serving tray, for instance. You've no idea how much time it saves me. For years and years, I wasted practically half an hour each meal, washing my dishes. I keep my china in the dining room. After

each meal, I would carry the dishes from the dining room, a few pieces at a time, and stack them in the kitchen, wherever there was room to stack. Then, when they were washed and dried, I carried the dishes back to the dining room again. Such a waste of steps!

"Now, with the aid of my wheeled tray, I can bring all the dishes from the dining room at the same time. I clean them, and stack them on the right side of the sink, in an orderly way. Then I place my dishpan in the sink, and wash the dishes. I stack them on the left side of the sink. When they're dried, I place them on the wheeled tray, and trundle them back to the dining room. My wheeled tray saves me a good many steps, in the course of a year," concluded Isabel.

"Of course it does. Most of us realize that convenience counts more in the kitchen than in any other room in the house. The kitchen is our workroom. In your family, and in my family, at least 1,000 meals are cooked during the year. Surely, for any job that comes as often as three times a day, every step-saving, time-saving arrangement possible should be included in the plan and equipment."

"That's right," said Isabel. "When we build our new home, I'm going to see that my kitchen is as well-planned as possible. What are considered the most important points that make for convenience in a kitchen, Aunt Sammy.

"First, last, and in between times, when you are planning and equipping a kitchen, think about the work to be done in it. Don't make the room too big. A large, spacious kitchen is paid for in miles of steps. Make the kitchen oblong, so there will be no more floor space than is actually needed.

"Study the relation of the kitchen to the rest of the house. Make a direct connection from kitchen to dining room, in the common wall between them. See to it that there is easy access to front and back doors, to the telephones, to the stairs, and to the second floor.

"Arrange for adequate ventilation in all weathers, and for good lighting at all work centers, at night as well as during the day.

"Screen the windows and doors against household pests. Flies especially, are a menace to health.

"Choose finishes for the floor, the walls, and the woodwork, that are durable, suitable in color, and easy to keep clean.

"Select furnishings that fit the wall and floor space, and will pay for themselves in usefulness. Weigh the pros and cons of built-in or movable pieces, and compare prices carefully.

"Make sure that there is an abundant supply of hot and cold running water, and a sanitary drainage system.

"Decide on the most comfortable height of working surfaces.

"Group all equipment, large and small, into compact work centers, for preparation of raw food, cooking, serving, clearing away and dishwashing, and any other activities done regularly and often in the kitchen.

"Arrange these groups from left to right, following the order in which the various jobs are done.

"Remember that the kitchen is above all else a place to prepare and serve food. Limit the kitchen to this use, if possible, and arrange for laundering and such work to be done in another place."

"I intend to," said Isabel. "I've had to do the washing in a kitchen, or on a back porch, all my life. But when we build our house, we're going to have a real laundry."

I hope Isabel does have a model kitchen, and a model laundry, some day. I knew Isabel when she was a very young housewife, when she carried many a bucket of water between the well and the farm kitchen, on wash day. She lived in Illinois. I notice that in Illinois, this year, the water bucket is the target of a state-wide contest. The goal of the women of the Illinois farm bureau federation for 1929 is: "Running water in every farm and small town home." More power to them -- or should I say, more water power?

This contest reminds me of a story I heard the other day.

"Do you have running water in the kitchen?" ~~some~~ one asked Mr. Jones.

"Yes," said Mr. Jones, "Mary runs for it."

Enough about kitchens today--after I've mentioned the bulletin, "Convenient Kitchens." It has plans for remodeling old kitchens, and for building new ones. If you want to bring your kitchen up-to-date, and learn new ways of saving steps, I suggest that you send for this bulletin.

Wednesday: "Furnishing the Nursery."

